

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1 and 4-21 will be pending. Claim 1 corresponds to former claim 3, which is free of the prior art. Claim 21 is a new claim combining features from current claims 4, 5, 7 and 10. Accordingly, no new matter is added.

A typographical error in the specification on page 1 is corrected.

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 3, 5-11, 15-17 and 20 are considered to be free of the prior art. In order to materially advance prosecution, claim 3 is written (as new claim 1) in independent form. Accordingly, since each of the claim objections and rejections are avoided by the foregoing claim amendments, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Each of the numbered paragraphs of the Detailed Action will be addressed in turn.

Priority

1. The Examiner has acknowledged the claim for foreign priority but indicates that the certified copy of the priority document has not been filed.

The certified copy of the priority document GB 9921928.9 has previously been forwarded to the U.S. Receiving Office, as shown by the attached copy of Form PCT/IB/304 (July 1998) (date of mailing: November 29, 2000).

Accordingly, please acknowledge receipt of the certified priority document to perfect Applicant's claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(b).

Claim Objection

2. Claim 19 is amended by replacing "of" with --comprising--. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3/4. The incorporation of the subject matter of claim 3 into claim 1, as suggested by the Examiner, overcomes this ground for rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

5/6. The incorporation of the subject matter of claim 3 into claim 1 obviates the rejection as applied to claim 4. The amendments to claims 9 and 10 obviate the rejection as applied to these claims.

Accordingly, all of the formal grounds for objection/rejection are avoided.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7/8. The rejection is applied to claims 1, 2, 4, 12-14, 18 and 19.

Since the subject matter of claim 3 is incorporated into claim 1, this ground for rejection is avoided. Furthermore, with regard to new claim 21, at least for the reason that this claim is dependent on allowable amended claim 1, claim 21 is also in condition for allowance.

Applicants agree that the cited but not applied art (listed on Forms 892 and 1449) are merely cumulative or less pertinent than the prior art relied on in the Section 102 rejection.

Conclusion

Therefore, all objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

PILLSBURY WINTHROP LLP

By: Richard A. Steinberg
Richard A. Steinberg
Registration No. 26,588
Direct No. (703) 905-2039

Paul L. Sharer
Registration No. 36,004
Direct No. (703) 905-2180

PLS/RAS
1600 Tysons Boulevard
McLean, VA 22101
(703) 905-2000 Telephone
(703) 905-2500 Facsimile

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Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement